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ABSTRACT

Using data collected from a stratified random sample of South Carolina high school seniors in 1969, the study compared the patterns of occupational choices among white and black boys and girls, and examined the relationship among race, sex, and teacher recruitment. Social class origin, local residence place, and scholastic performance were introduced to further specify the effects of race and sex on teacher choice. The sample included 1,510 white boys, 762 black boys, 1,464 white girls, and 762 black girls from 27 primarily white and 14 primarily black rural and urban high schools in 26 South Carolina counties. Data were obtained through self-administered questionnaires. Some findings were: not only did white boys have higher occupational expectations than either white girls or blacks, but the range of professional choices they aimed for was wider and more varied; teaching attracted only 12.8% of all professionally oriented white boys; teaching was the most important professional career option for blacks and white girls; seniors who came from lower social class origins, were reared in rural environs, and performed less well in school were, in general, more likely to choose teaching as a professional career plan than their higher status, urban, and more academically talented counterparts; over 55% of the black girls ranked as high scholastic performers aimed only for lower level, non-professional occupations. (NQ)

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RECRUITMENT TO TEACHING: CAREER EXPECTATIONS OF SOUTH CAROLINA YOUNG PEOPLE

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Paper presented at the Rural Sociology Section of the Annual Meetings of the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists (SAAS) February 5-8, 1978, Houston, Texas

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Recruitment to Teaching: Career Expectations of South Carolina Young People

Analyzing data from three modern societies (Norway, Germany, and the United States), Schwarzweller and Lyson (1977) explored the hypothesis that the teaching profession as a career choice or status attainment strategy, often serves as a feasible mobility option for ambitious young people whose occupational alternatives, for whatever reasons, are limited. Their findings showed, for example, that:

> ...in rural America...a career in teaching represents an important means by which lower status youths, girls in general, and particularly girls from lower status origins, can enhance their lot in life and hope to achieve a modest degree of upward social mobility.

For this paper, we take as a starting point the thesis offered by Schwarzweller and Lyson that teaching is often perceived as a transitional stage (i.e., a way up and out) on a ladder of upward intergenerational mobility. The stiff entrance requirements, keen competition, and long and rigorous training for many professional occupations (e.g., physician, lawyer, etc.) often can be met only by the most highly motivated, intelligent, and affluent aspirants. Teaching as a professional career choice, on the other hand, is marked by easier entre', a shorter period of training, and a less rigorous course of study. Teaching is, in fact, not only one of the most widely visible professional role models in America, but is also one of the most accessible professional career options. Thus, we would expect those youngsters who are not as academically talented, who come from lower status homes where monetary and motivational

resources for higher education are limited, who grow up in areas where other professional role models are missing, or who are discouraged from pursuing other professional career lines because of their race or sex, to be more likely to choose a teaching career.

In this paper we will be especially concerned with the relationship between race and sex and the recruitment to teaching. In no study to our knowledge have the effects of race and sex been treated simultaneously in researching the social background of teachers. In fact, it is somewhat of a bewilderment, given the critical role teachers play in training and sorting talent in our society that so little is known about their social origins and background characteristics.

Researches by Pavalko (1965), Payne and Dunkleberger (1977), Lortie (1975, Kronus (1965), Wright and Tuska (1968), and Getzels and Jackson (1963) have examined various factors associated with entre' into the teaching profession. (An excellent bibliography on existing literature relating to the teaching profession can be found in Lortie (1975).) As Schwarzweller and Lyson note, however, most researches in this area tend to be more concerned with the personality attributes of young people entering teaching than with their social origins and characteristics. Further, many previous studies used relatively small, homogeneous samples and consequently their findings are relatively limited in scope. (Two exceptions are Pavalko's (1965) study of a cross section of Wisconsin youth and Payne and Dunkleberger's (1977) research on 1500 Alabama high school seniors.)

The purpose of this paper is to broaden our understanding of the conditions and factors that orient certain young people toward teaching. Specifically, we will compare the occupational orientations of a cross-section of black and white South Carolina high school seniors as they relate to pursuit of a teaching career. Our analytical approach is threefold. First, we shall compare the patterns of occupational choices among white boys, white girls, black boys and black girls. Second, our attention will be directed toward examining the relative attractiveness of teaching vis-a-vis other professions for each subgroup in our sample. Finally, to elaborate the effects of race and sex on the decision to pursue a teaching career we shall introduce local residence place, social class origin, and scholastic performance in school as conditions or factors that may further influence the teacher recruitment system toward favoring a particular type of entrant.

CURRENT RACE - SEX COMPOSITION OF U.S. AND SOUTH CAROLINA TEACHERS

It is well known that blacks have traditionally occupied proportionately fewer upper status-professional positions than whites. In 1970, for example, 15.5 percent of the white work force held professional jobs compared to only 8.3 percent of the black work force (see Table 1). For men these differences were even greater. Furthermore, although the census lists more than 80 different "professional, technical, and kindred" job titles, over 35 percent of blacks in this top prestige stratum were either primary or secondary teachers, while only 22.1 percent of the whites were teachers.

In South Carolina many of these racial disparities are magnified. For example, in 1970, over 70 percent of black women occupying professional positions were teachers compared to only 42.6 percent of similarly ranked white women. For South Carolina black men at the professional level, 45.6 percent were teachers, while only 7.1 percent of the white men were teachers. Clearly then, in the past, for South Carolina women and blacks attaining a professional status was almost synonomous with becoming a teacher.

To find reasons for the underrepresentation of blacks at the top eschelons of the occupational hierarchy and the overrepresentation of blacks and women as teachers at this status level, one need only look at the many formal and informal barriers and constraints that have long operated to discourage these groups from gaining admittance to other high status occupations. Implicit and explicit forms of segregation, discrimination, and tracking (along both sex and race lines) have effectively closed the gates to most professional jobs for all but a few minorities and women. Becoming a teacher, perhaps more than any other occupation then, has been a major avenue whereby those segments of the population denied admittance to other professional occupations (for whatever reasons) have been allowed to attain pro- status. Thus, even though equal employment opportunity efforts, and affirmative action programs have been instituted to open-u previously closed professional positions to both women and minorities, teaching as a "proven" strategy for satisfying the status ambitions of women and blacks remains as important and viable career option and as such needs to be explored further.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Sample

Data for this study are part of USDA Research Project S-81: "Development of Human Resource Potentials of Rural Youth in the South and Their Patterns of Mobility."[1] Data were collected from high school seniors in South Carolina in 1969. Comparable data were also gathered in 1968 from seniors in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. The study population under consideration here consists of the total South Carolina segment only (N = 4376). The South Carolina portion is a state-wide stratified random sample of 1,510 white boys, 762 black boys, 1,464 white girls, and 762 black girls in 41 rural and urban high schools in 26 South Carolina counties. Data were obtained through self-administered questionnaires. All seniors present in school the day the questionnaire was administered are included in the study. No attempt was made to gather information from those absent on the day the field worker visited the school. It should be noted that in 1969, most South Carolina high schools were operating under the so-called "freedom of choice" method of assigning pupils to school by race. Our sample includes students from 27 primarily white (over 50 percent) high schools and 14 primarily black (over 50 percent) high schools. (For a more detailed account of the data collection procedures and the population composition for the South Carolina segment of S-81, see Boyd; 1970).)

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1. USDA Research Project S-81 expired in 1976. A new research project - S-114: "Defining and Achieving Life Goals: A Process of Human Resource Development" has since been instituted to extend and expand upon the work begun under S-81.

Study Variables

Occupational career plan, the main problematic variable, was determined from the response to the question: "Sometimes we are not always able to do what we want most. What kind of job do you really expect to have most of your life?" (This question followed a more general question about the student's career aspirations: "If you were completely free to choose any job, what would you desire most as a lifetime job?") Responses were edited and coded according to categories compatible with the occupational classification system used by the U.S. Bureau of Census. Teacher was coded as a separate occupational choice in the "Professional, Technical, and Kindred" stratum.

The main job of the major money earner in the home is used as an indicant of social class origin. This information was obtained from an open-ended question and coded according to census categories. For our purposes, the ordinal census divisions are reduced to a dichotomy comparing manual and nonmanual occupations.

Scholastic performance was assessed by a senior's final grade point average or relative status in the classroom. Each senior was ranked in relation to his classmates within his high school. A dichotomy separating the "lower" half from the "upper" half is employed in this paper.

SEX AND RACE DIFFERENTIALS IN PATTERNS OF CAREER CHOICE:

Boys and whites are generally more inclined toward professional careers than either girls or blacks (Table 2). Close to 50 percent of the white boys in our study population, for example, plan to

pursue a professional career line. On the other hand, only 35 percent of the black girls in our sample expect to attain professional status.

The most popular professional choice for white boys was engineering, while teaching was the most frequent choice for white girls and blacks. In fact, relative to other professional alternatives, teaching represented almost half of all professional choices for white girls and close to 40 percent of all professional choices for both black boys and girls. However, teaching comprised only 12.8 percent of all professional choices for white boys.

Looking at correlations within sex and race categories (Table 3), we find that, compared with their white peers, black boys are far more inclined to choose teaching relative to other professional careers (Q = .59). Further, white girls are more inclined toward teaching careers than are white boys (Q = .72); However, there are negligible differences between black girls and black boys (Q = .08) and between white girls and black girls (Q = -.16) in the proportion selecting teaching as a professional choice.

Finally, it should be noted that the proportion of white girls relative to all white youths who aspire to become teachers is 77.1 percent. For blacks, however, girls represent only 59.5 percent of all those expecting to become teachers. When compared to current female/male teacher ratios in the U.S. (70/30 - white; 78/22 - black) and in South Carolina (84/16 - white; 79/21 - black), these findings clearly show that a new avenue of upward social mobility is opening up for black men.

To briefly summarize, then, white boys not only have higher career expectations than the other sub-groups sampled here, but the

range of professional occupations they expect to attain is also broader and more varied. Teaching represents only one of a number of feasible professional options for this group. For white girls and blacks, on the other hand, the dominant theme that characterizes their professional status aspirations is to become a teacher.

We shall now elaborate these basic race/sex relationships by introducing three conditional factors (residence place, social class origin, and grade achievement) that may effect a person's decision to enter teaching.

THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL CLASS ORIGIN

Social class origin as conceived here, represents a youngster's position within the social stratification system that is characterized by greater or lesser life chances relative to other classes. A person's social class position provides both a structural basis as well as a normative frame of reference from which career goal emerge. Not surprisingly, regardless of race or sex, seniors from nonmanual background homes have higher professional ambitions than their manual background peers (Table 4).

In terms of the relative popularity of teaching as a professional career choice, however, social class origin has no effect for either black or white boys and only a negligible effect for black girls (Q = .195) or white girls (Q = .178) (Table 4). The relationships for both groups of girls, though weak, show that nonmanual girls are more inclined toward teaching than their manual background counterparts. These findings are unexpected since our thesis, consistent with earlier work by Schwarzweller and Lyson, suggests that teachers should be the more popular professional choice among young people from lower social class origins.

Reasons for the inconsistency are somewhat unclear, but may have to do with the nature of the occupational choice coding scheme employed in this study. Schwarzweller and Lyson employed a modified Edwards (1943) format and treated some "borderline" professional choices (e.g., nursing, computer programmer, etc.) an non-professional occupations. In the present study these same occupational choices were coded according to census categories and included in the professional ranks. Recoding the present data, for example, so that nursing and other "para-professional" medical career (e.g., medical technologist, physical therapist, etc.) are dropped from the professional category shows that correlation coefficients between teacher choice and social class origin are reduced somewhat for black girls to .14 and are reversed to -.08 for white girls, thus approaching the expected relationships. A more precise replication of the earlier study is, unfortunately, not possible.

One additional set of relationships in Table 4 should also be noted. Professional career expectations within class categories for whites are very similar for boys and girls. About 60 percent of the high status white boys and girls are aiming for professional jobs while only about 35 percent of the low status whites have similar expectations. In other words, the opportunity structures of white South Carolina high school seniors as they relate to professional status attainment are not affected by sex. (Of course white girls are clearly more oriented toward teaching than white boys, regardless of class origin.)

For blacks, on the other hand, although no sex differences are found in the professional status expectations of low social class youth, among high class seniors substatially more girls (64.5 percent)

plan to obtain professional level positions than high status boys (51.3 percent). Furthermore, not only are upper status black girls more oriented toward professional occupations in general than boys, but the proportion expecting to become teachers is also much higher (30.2 percent vs. 18.4 percent). Among blacks from manual social class backgrounds, however, both professional and teacher expectations are similar for boys and girls. In short, although Tables 1-3 show that black males, in general, use teaching as a mobility ladder and facilitator, Table 4 reveals that for blacks from the higher levels of the socio-economic status hierarchy it is either normatively more acceptable or structurally easier for girls to become teachers.

THE EFFECT OF LOCAL RESIDENCE PLACE

With few exceptions, most previous researches have found that, regardless of the criteria for categorizing communities, youth from small, more rural neighborhoods, are less likely to aspire toward high occupational status than youth from urban areas or large towns. This is not surprising since not only is the opportunity structure in rural areas narrower and more restricted than that found in the cities, but also fewer high status role models exist in the rural hinterlands compared to the cities. (Teacher and minister are probably the most "visible" professions in rural America.)

In the present study, with the exception of white girls, teaching is a more popular career choice among those seniors reared in small town, open country, or farm environs than among those raised in the larger towns and cities of the state (Table 5). We should note, of course, that rural youth are generally less inclined toward professional status than their urban peers.

The effect of rural residence is stronger for boys, especially white boys (Q = .372) than for girls. In fact, among white boys aiming toward professional careers, twice as many seniors from rural backgrounds (19.4 percent) expect to become teachers as urban seniors (9.9 percent). For black boys the association between rural residence background and teacher choice is not as strong (Q = .197). While over 40 percent of rural black boys expect to become teachers, over 30 percent of their more urban counterparts held similar expectations.

For black girls there is a relatively weak association between rural residence and teacher expectation (Q = .131). Slightly more rural girls (42.6 percent) plan to become teachers than urban girls (36.4 percent). For white girls, however, it is interesting to note that although those from urban areas of South Carolina are more oriented toward professions than their rural cousins (Table 5), the relative proportion expecting to become teachers is the same.

SCHOLASTIC PERFORMANCE

High academic performance in school is generally regarded as an important "stepping stone" for admission to college and concommittantly entre' into the professions. Grades as measures of both intellectual ability and skill in coping with the social order of the classroom are accepted as legitimate sorting criterion in our educational system. A person who attain high grades has, in effect, attained the endorsement of the society in general, and the school system in particular, to pursue high status occupational goals.

Not surprisingly, Table 6 shows that, among all subpopulations in this study, scholastic performance is positively associated with a decision to pursue a professional career track. However, with the exception of white girls, Table 6 also reveals a weak positive relationship between academic achievement and popularity of teaching as a professional career option. For white boys and blacks, in other words, proportionately more low academic achievers aspire to teaching than their more scholastically talented counterparts. This finding, consistent with our research hypothesis, suggests that teaching may be viewed as a less challenging and rewarding professional career line and consequently one whose entrance requirements are less strigent vis-a-vis other professions.

For white girls a moderate negative relationship (Q = -.484) exists between grade rank and teacher choice. Over 50 percent of the professionally oriented girls ranked in the upper half of their graduating class expect to become teachers. On the other hand, only slightly over one-fourth of the lower achievers manifest similar expectation patterns.

The fact that close to 60 percent of the better qualified white girls in the present study are aiming for professional careers (compared to only 44.8 percent of similarly ranked black girls) and that over half of these expect to become teachers suggests that teaching is a very convenient, socially desireable, and readily accessible professional career option. High achieving black girls (and to a lesser extent black boys), on the other hand, apparently confront a more limited opportunity structure. Superior academic performance

in high school does not manifest itself in greatly increased teacher expectations. Furthermore, among black girls, over 55 percent of the high scholastic performers aim only for lower level, non-professional (i.e., white collar/blue collar) occupations.

In any case, a more thorough examination and clarification of the reasons behind the unique and somewhat unexpected relationship between scholastic performance and professional/teacher expectations for white girls is an area of research that merits further consideration.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This paper continues a line of research into the social background characteristics of young people selecting teaching as a career choice. Specifically, using data collected from a stratified random sample of South Carolina high school seniors, we examined the relationship among race, sex, and teacher recruitment. Social class origin, local residence place, and scholastic performance were introduced to further specify the effects of race and sex on teacher choice. Our guiding research hypothesis, drawn from earlier work by Schwarzweller and Lyson (1977), suggested that a decision to enter teaching serves as a workable mobility option for ambitious young people whose professional career alternatives, for whatever reasons, are limited.

Our findings show, not surprisingly, that white boys not only have higher occupational expectations than either white girls or blacks, but that the range of professional choices they aim for is wider and more varied. Teaching attracts only 12.8 percent of all professionally oriented white boys.

For blacks and white girls, on the other hand, teaching is by far their most important professional career option. In fact, nearly half of the 41.6 percent of the white girls aiming for professional jobs expect to become teachers. The American teacher recruitment system, as it manifests itself in the career expectations of South Carolina high school seniors, then, is clearly more attractive and presents fewer entrance barriers to two groups (women and blacks) who traditionally have been discouraged from entering other professional occupations.

With the exception of white girls, the effects of three control factors (social class origin, local residence place, and scholastic performance) on the patterning of professional and teacher plans lends additional support to our exploratory hypothesis. Correlation coefficients in Tables 3-6 show that seniors who come from lower social class origins, who are reared in rural environs, and who perform less well in school are, in general, more likely to choose teaching as a professional career plan than their higher status, urban, and more academically talented counterparts. For boys especially, it is interesting to note that, although the proportion of professionally oriented seniors expecting to teach differs greatly by race, our control factors operate in the same fashion for both blacks and whites.

In conclusion, this paper shows that the structuring of professional career ambition is primarily dependent on the ascribed attributes of race and sex. Those most favored in the pursuit of professional occupations are white males. Women and minorities,

on the other hand, are in a more disadvantaged position. They confront a professional selection system characterized by overt and covert forms of segregation, discrimination and tracking.

Furthermore, within race and sex categories, the nature and range of professional career alternatives are further influenced by a youngster's social and scholastic origins. Generally speaking, however, our data indicate that these "secondary" influences operate only in a limited sense and with few exceptions do not dampen the effects of race or sex.

Today, a decision to pursue a career in teaching serves not only to satisfy the status ambitions of those groups denied other professional opportunities, but also to provide these groups with a leg-up on the ladder of intergenerational mobility. However, in the future, as the professional strata broadens and entre' to all professions is greased by formal and informal pressures for women and minorities, race and sex may become less deterministic while the effects of social class, scholastic performance, local residence place, and other background factors gain in relative significance and importance.

Table 1. Professionals as Percent of Total Work Force and Teachers as Percent of all professionals in the United States and South Carolina by race and sex.[1]

Percentage of work force classified as "professional"	Total	White Males	White Females	Black Males	Black Females
United States	14.8	15.0	16.3	5.8	11.3
South Carolina	11.5	11.7	15.5	3.3	10.3
Percentage of those classified "professional" who are teachers					
United States	22.4	10.7	39.3	20.0	44.7
South Carolina	29.0	7.1	42.6	45.6	70.5

1. Data source: U.S. Census: 1970 Census of Population. "General Social and Economic Characteristics," PC(1)-C1; and U.S. Census: 1970 Census of Population. Characteristics of the Population." Part 42, South Carolina.

Table 2. Occupational Career Choice by Race and Sex.

Occupational Choice	Whites		Blacks	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
	-- Percent --			
Teacher	6.2	19.9	13.0	13.9
Engineer	10.5	--	3.1	--
Medical*	3.8	9.1	1.3	7.8
Other Prof.	27.8	12.7	18.7	13.3
Total Prof.	48.3	41.6	36.1	35.0
White Col.	20.9	34.4	14.5	36.4
Manual	30.8	8.8	49.4	24.9
Housewife	--	15.2	--	3.7
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total (N)	(1379)	(1438)	(524)	(722)
Teacher as percent of all professional choices	12.8	47.7	36.0	39.7

*Includes Doctor, Nurse, and other medical occupations classified as Professional by the U.S. Census.

Table 3. Associations (Yules Q) between inclination toward teaching as a professional occupational choice and race and sex.

Boys vs. Girls[1]		
	White	.724
	Black	.079
White vs. Black[2]		
	Boys	.587
	Girls	.163

1. Relative inclination of girls towards teaching versus other professions.

2. Relative inclination of blacks towards teaching versus other professions.

Table 4. Occupational career choice by father's occupational status by race and sex.

Occupational choice	White Boys		White Girls		Black Boys		Black Girls	
	Manual	Nonmanual	Manual	Nonmanual	Manual	Nonmanual	Manual	Nonmanual
	-- Percent --							
Teacher	5.2	6.8	14.7	32.1	13.4	18.4	12.6	30.2
Other Professions	31.6	51.2	20.3	30.9	22.3	32.9	21.3	34.3
White collar/Manual*	63.2	42.0	65.0	37.0	64.4	48.7	66.1	35.4
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total (N)	(563)	(731)	(523)	(619)	(337)	(76)	(436)	(96)
Degree (Q) of association: relative inclination of manual worker seniors towards teaching vs. other professions	.098		-.178		.034		-.195	
Teacher as % of all professional choices	14.0	11.8	42.1	51.0	37.5	35.9	37.2	46.8

*Note: In this and subsequent tables, "white collar", "manual worker", and "farmer" categories have been combined into a single "lower status" category for comparative purposes. All cases of missing information, for whatever reason, have been omitted.

Table 5. Occupational career choice by residence place, race and sex.

Occupational choice	White Boys		White Girls		Black Boys		Black Girls	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
	-- Percent --							
Teacher	7.2	5.5	18.5	26.9	12.1	14.9	13.1	16.4
Other Professions	29.9	50.2	20.1	29.6	17.7	32.3	17.6	28.6
White collar/Manual	62.9	44.3	61.4	43.8	70.2	52.8	69.4	55.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total (N)	(833)	(542)	(492)	(724)	(322)	(195)	(421)	(269)
Degree (Q) of association: relative inclination of rural seniors towards teaching vs. other professions.	.372		.000		.197		.131	
Teacher as % of all professional choices	19.4	9.9	47.9	47.9	40.6	31.5	42.6	36.4

Table 6. Occupational career choice by scholastic performance rank by race and sex.

Occupational choice	White Boys		White Girls		Black Boys		Black Girls	
	Lower Rank	Upper Rank	Lower Rank	Upper Rank	Lower Rank	Upper Rank	Lower Rank	Upper Rank
				-- Percent --				
Teacher	4.8	6.3	8.0	30.2	11.2	16.8	12.8	18.6
Other Professions	31.1	58.1	21.9	28.9	16.8	36.3	16.5	26.2
White collar/Manual	64.1	35.5	70.1	40.9	72.0	46.9	70.0	55.2
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total (N)	(476)	(394)	(251)	(523)	(107)	(113)	(133)	(183)
Degree (Q) of association: relative inclination of manual worker seniors towards teaching vs. other professions	.175		-.484		.180		.043	
Teacher as % of all professional choices	13.5	9.8	26.7	51.1	40.0	31.7	43.6	41.5

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